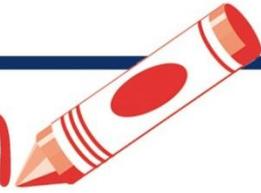


Early Learning Coalition



of Pinellas County, Inc.

Policy: ELCPC-60.2.1	Title: Sliding Fee and Parent Co-Payments for School Readiness	
	Review Date: June 2017	Next Review Date: June 2018

References: F.S. 1002.84, F.S. 1002.87, F.S. 1002.88 and Rule 60M-4.400 Florida Administrative Code

Purpose: To establish a standardized policy for assessing parental co-payments.

Background: All parents have a right and obligation to share in the cost of the child care and to be shown leniency when circumstances warrant a waiver or temporary waiver of those co-payments.

Policy:

Definitions:

“At Risk” refers to children at risk of abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or exploitation. This includes children that are under protective services, are homeless or are residing in a domestic violence shelter.

“Co-payment” means the sum of money the parent or caregiver, based on the Coalition sliding fee scale, pays daily, which is subtracted from the reimbursement rate and paid directly to the provider of child care.

“Coalition” refers to the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. (ELCP).

“Initial Child” means the youngest child receiving School Readiness Services in a family unit.

“Parent” refers to the identified parent, guardian or responsible adult for the child being served.

“Sliding Fee Scale” means a system of cost sharing by a family based on income and family size.

“Temporary Waiver” means a co-payment may be temporarily waived on a case-by-case basis for families with income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level during an event that limits a parent’s ability to pay in accordance with Section 1002.84(8), F.S. The request for the co-payment waiver must be documented in the case file during the initial authorization for care and at each redetermination.

“Waiver” means a co-payment may be waived on a case-by-case basis for families participating in an at-risk program as defined in Section 1002.81(1), F.S. The request for the co-payment waiver must be documented during the initial authorization for care and at each redetermination.

Procedures:

- 1) Sliding fee and parent co-payments apply only to the School Readiness Programs. The sliding fee scale establishes a co-payment for parents based upon their family size and their family income.
- 2) The co-payment for parents will be in effect for the family’s determined eligibility period unless:
 - a. A subsequent redetermination is conducted during the year; or
 - b. The referring case manager requests and is granted a reduction in the co-payment due to special circumstances; or
 - c. An incorrect co-payment was determined; or
 - d. There is any change in marital status, employment status, income or family size.
- 3) The Sliding fee scale is established by the Florida Office of Early Learning-DOE annually, based on the most recent report of the Federal Poverty Levels.
- 4) When the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is released by the Florida Office of Early Learning-DOE, the Coalition must adopt a new sliding fee schedule effective June 1. The Coalition will consider the utilization of the existing budget when making their selection.
- 5) Following the annual adoption of a new fee schedule, the Coalition will determine a date to begin implementation. Family Services will ensure that parents and child care providers are notified of any changes to the respective co-payment the next time the a family’s eligibility status is re-evaluated.
- 6) Parents are required to share in the cost of the child care by making a co-payment as arranged with the child care provider. Providers are statutorily required to collect and document the receipt of the parent co-payment.
- 7) Parents who are in arrears, as documented by the child care provider, will be notified in writing of their non-compliance and provided a deadline, not to exceed two weeks, in which to either pay or develop a satisfactory payment plan with the child care provider. The written notice will also advise the parent that failure to comply with the deadline will result in termination from the program.
- 8) Parents may not transfer from one School Readiness Provider to another until the parent has submitted documentation in the form of current verifiable receipts or a signed form from the current School Readiness provider to the Coalition stating that the parent has satisfactorily fulfilled the copayment obligation.
- 9) If a child care provider terminates the child care arrangement based on the parent’s failure to comply with their co-payment, the child may not be placed in another School Readiness Program until the parent and provider have come to a satisfactory payment arrangement.
- 10) Co-payment for siblings: In the case of siblings, the youngest child is considered the initial child for School Readiness Services and a full parent co-payment is assessed. Co-payments for subsequent siblings are assessed at a 25% discount of the initial child’s fee if full time, and one half sibling’s fee if part time.
- 11) Requests for co-payment waivers of parental co-payments completed by the referring case manager will be considered by the Coalition on a case-by-case basis. Unless circumstances otherwise warrant, referring case managers must make a written request to the Coalition for

a waiver of co-payments as soon as the need exists. Proof of the need for waiver may be required

- 12) Temporary co-payment waivers will be considered by the Coalition on a case-by-case basis for families with income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level during an event that limits a parent's ability to pay. The request for the co-payment waiver must be documented in the case file during the initial authorization for care and at each redetermination.
- 13) The waiver of co-payments is limited to the time period the parent is unable to make the required payment. A beginning and ending date will be assigned by the Coalition at which time the original co-payment will be resumed.
- 14) The Coalition will document the co-payment waiver and send a letter to the provider and the parent with a statement of the co-payment waived.
- 15) Waivers and temporary waivers of parental –co-payments may be granted by the Coalition under the following documented circumstances:
 - a. Child's parents/guardians are in prison;
 - b. Child's parents/guardians are in residential treatment;
 - c. Child's parents/guardians become incapacitated;
 - d. Death of child's parents/guardians;.
 - e. Homeless shelter living arrangements;
 - f. Child's parents/guardians experience a natural disaster (storm, earthquake, etc.);
 - g. Child's parents/guardians experience an emergency situation such as a fire or robbery; or
 - h. Parents are participating in parenting classes.

Exhibits:

At Risk Co-Payment Waiver Request Form
Temporary Co-Payment Waiver Request Form
Sliding Fee Schedule (most recently adopted)